



## If not punishment, what?

At best, punishing unwanted behavior achieves short-term compliance and at worst, resentment, distrust, anger, alienation. If punishment doesn't teach students the needed social skills and expectations, what does?

Social Skills Restoration (SSR) is a circle protocol for holding misbehaving students accountable for the behavior that has harmed the community. (Restorative Conferencing is for the most serious matters.) Accountability does not mean punishment, but to give account of one's actions. Thus, in SSR circles of, say, 10-12 participants, the Facilitator(s) helps each student take responsibility for their actions and process their effects on the community. The Facilitator does so by asking kind, firm, Restorative questions.

***Nothing changes behavior as effectively as recognizing and not liking your own effect on the community.***

## The Center of an Accountability System

Replacing behavior management with an accountability system requires the system designers to examine and re-think how to cultivate the lagging social-and-emotional skills that help a community be productive and get along with one another. What should be handled on the spot? What needs to be referred for extra support? SSR is neither classroom management nor the handling of serious offenses. It falls in between, a protocol for teaching self-regulation.

Issues that might to to SSR could include:

- Aggressive language or behavior
- Poor or slack performance
- Off-task, disruptive behavior
- Taunting, contemptuous, dismissive hurtfulness
- Interpersonal conflict that distracts the group's leader (teacher, for example)
- Inappropriate sexual gestures or comments.
- Or others determined by school



## Yes, time is limited.

Developing and implementing an Accountability System will take time and effort, but the benefits are far reaching. Cultivating a culture of understanding and repairing harm will bring an undeniable energy that helps the whole community thrive.



Youth Restoration Project  
Cultivating Relationships; Restoring Community

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This Restorative Accountability System involves up to six parts. Ideally, adults and students use their restorative skills to resolve their issues at stage one. Social Skills Restoration (SSR) takes place when further action is needed. Referrals and the need for external supports drop considerably when communities become accustomed to holding one another accountable, in kind, restorative ways.

## 1. THE INCIDENT

### Emergent or Chronic.

- The student disrupts or disengages.
- The adult tries at least three Restorative interventions in an effort to re-engage the student and keep him/her in the classroom or on task.

## 2. THE REFERRAL

The adult fills out a simple referral form that specifies what sort of help is needed with the problematic student.

The options for the adult are:

- Morning, lunch or after-school Social Skills Restoration circle
- Remove from class
- Walk and talk with appropriate adult immediately or later
- Call home
- Clinical intervention
- Mediation (conflict between teacher/student or student/student)
- Suspension
- Conference

## 3. COORDINATOR\* REVIEWS REFERRALS

The Coordinator decides on the next steps, as outlined above, and communicates the decision to the referring adult.

## 4. SOCIAL SKILLS RESTORATION CIRCLE

### Questions might include:

- What happened?
- Who was affected?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What did you want? Did you get it?
- What else might have been more effective?
- What needs to happen now?
- How can we make this right?

*The SSR circle itself often replaces traditional detention, but can be held at any time of the day. In the course of processing the incident together, the student and Facilitator\* decide on appropriate next steps — such as: apologize, make amends, clean up, or generally repair the situation.*

## 5. WHAT IF SSR FAILS?

If the unwanted behavior continues after several tries at SSR, the Accountability System designers need to have created a series of increasingly constricting interventions. Widening the circle with empathetic or clinical adults is usually the first step. But if poor choices persist, the misbehaving person will have to start choosing among more traditional options to limit the disruptive effect on the community. Those choices might include community service, withholding social privileges and others.

## 6. RESTORATIVE CONFERCING

Conferencing is used for the most serious or chronic offenses including weapons, violence, AWOL or safety violations. A Conference Facilitator brings together the affected parties including parents, victims, community members and others, to examine the situation and draft an agreement for making the necessary amends. If the terms of the agreement are not met, traditional consequences follow, such as suspension or involvement with other public agencies.

**\*Coordinator:** The person who receives the referral form and decides what to do.

**\*Facilitator:** The people trained in the Restorative skills, especially the art of questioning.

**YRP OFFERS INTENSIVE TRAINING IN BOTH SKILLS.**

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